

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The rejections presented in the Office Action dated May 22, 2006 (hereinafter Office Action) have been considered. Claims 1-35 remain pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 6, 14, 19, 24, and 30 have been amended. Reconsideration of the pending claims and allowance of the application in view of the present response is respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the telephonic discussion with the Examiner concerning the pending claims and willingness to consider the present amendment. Applicant has carefully reviewed the asserted references and new reference U.S. Patent No. 6,501,994. This new reference was identified by the Examiner during the telephonic discussion as being of possible relevance, but has not yet been considered and entered into the record.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 6, 14, 19, 24, and 30 to recite subject matter clearly patentable over the art of record and U.S. Patent No. 6,501,994. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims as amended and entry/consideration of U.S. Patent No. 6,501,994 into the record.

Claims 1, 3, 6, 8, 11-14, 16, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27, 30, 31 and 33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,728,140 to *Salo et al.* (hereinafter "*Salo*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,545,210 to *Helland et al.* (hereinafter "*Helland*"), for reasons of record. Claims 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 17, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32 and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Salo* in view of *Helland* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,931,862 to *Carson* (hereinafter "*Carson*") for reasons of record. Claims 5, 10, 18, 23, 29 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Salo* in view of *Helland* and further in view of *Stokes* H356 (hereinafter "*Stokes*") for reasons of record.

Each of Applicant's independent claims 1, 6, 14, 19, 24, and 30 has been amended to recite, in some form, a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve covering all of an electrically active surface of the active fixation arrangement or electrode sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue. None of the asserted reference, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests a cardiac lead that includes such features.

The asserted references of record disclose various lead/electrode configurations that include partially insulated (electrically insulated), partially bare, or entirely bare helical electrode fixation elements. U.S. Patent No. 6,501,994 discloses a helix that, in preferred embodiments, is partially covered with an electrical insulator, leaving a portion of the helix bare. In one embodiment, insulating material covers 100% of the helix, in which case the helix is not electrically active (i.e. it is fully electrically insulated) and an additional electrode element is required, such as mesh 808 shown in Figure 6.

Applicant respectfully submits that none of the asserted references, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests an electrode or active fixation arrangement in which all of an electrically active surface of same is provided with a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue. Moreover, none of the asserted references teaches or suggests a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve that is of a character that both covers an electrically active surface of an electrode element and yet facilitates electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue. The coatings on the electrode surfaces disclosed in the asserted references are electrically insulative, and, therefore, such coated electrode surfaces can not facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue.

Applicant's present amendments to the pending claims represent an election to further prosecute claims directed to clearly allowable subject matter. It is to be understood that Applicant's election does not constitute acquiescence to the Examiner's rejection of the claims on substantive art grounds as presented in the office actions. In particular, Applicant does not acquiesce to the Examiner's characterization of the asserted art or Applicant's claimed subject matter, nor of the Examiner's application of the asserted art to Applicant's claimed subject matter. Applicant reserves the right to address the Examiner's characterizations and rejections when prosecuting the rejected claims in one or more continuing applications.

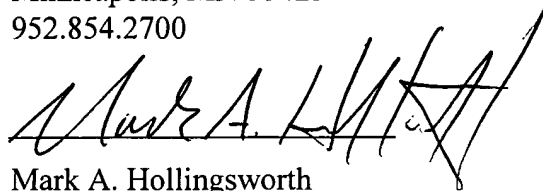
Applicant submits that the pending claims, as amended, are allowable over the art of record and newly identified U.S. Patent No. 6,501,994. Authorization is given to charge Deposit Account No. 50-3581 (GUID.076PA) any necessary fees for this filing. If the Examiner believes it necessary or helpful, the undersigned attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact him at to discuss any issues related to this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 22, 2006

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Hollingsworth", is written over a horizontal line.

Mark A. Hollingsworth
Reg. No. 38,491